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AROUND THE REGION

Appeal in Espionage Case

Federal prosecutors yesterday appealed to the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals an Alexandria judge's ruling on the nature and amount of classified information that can be used in evidence in the trial of accused spy Richard Craig Smith.

Federal Judge Richard L. Williams' ruling would allow Smith to testify and "present any other evidence, whether classified or not, tending to corroborate his defense" that he was working for the CIA at the time he provided the names of six U.S. double agents to a Soviet intelligence officer in Tokyo.

Prosecutors had argued that Smith should not be allowed to use any such information because his version is a "total fabrication." But the judge noted in a 34-page ruling that there is independent evidence to corroborate Smith's story and evidence that the CIA might disavow any contact with him.

The trial has been postponed pending the appeal, which may not be decided for four months.